REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-28 are considered in the Office action.

Claim 28 has been objected to because it depends on itself.

Claims 1-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Siwinski et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,938,976 ("Siwinski").

Reply

Applicants have added new claims 29 and 30, amended claims 1-4, 7, 9-11 and 25-27, and cancelled claims 5-6, 8, 12-24 and 28 without prejudice. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited reference does not describe or suggest the amended claims.

New claim 29 recites a printing system that includes a plurality of ink containers, each ink container including an ink and an associated tag, each tag including data that identifies the manufacturing date of the associated ink, each ink having an expiration date, a reader adapted to read the data from an identified tag, and a controller coupled to the reader, the controller adapted to determine if the expiration date of the ink associated with the identified tag has been exceeded.

New claim 30 recites a method for use with a printing system that comprises a plurality of ink containers, each ink container including an ink that has an expiration date, the method including providing a plurality of tags, uniquely associating each tag with a corresponding one of the containers, each tag including data that identifies the manufacturing date of the associated ink, reading the data from an identified tag, and determining if the expiration date of the ink associated with the identified tag has been exceeded.

Siwinski does not describe the claimed invention. Siwinski describes systems that read, among other things, manufacturing date data from transponders associated with ink reservoirs. However, Siwinski does not describe anything regarding reading manufacturing date data from a tag associated with an ink container to determine if the expiration date of the ink associated with the tag has been exceeded.

Indeed, Siwinski nowhere mentions anything regarding reading or determining ink expiration date.

Further, Siwinski does not suggest the claimed invention, and in fact, seems to point away from the claimed invention. Siwinski states that machine control logic processor 32 runs a program that controls various aspects of print operation, such as writing speed, drying time and ink dot size. (Col. 11, lines 15-18). Prior to beginning a print job, control logic processor 32 accesses stored information from the memory associated with each consumable to determine how to adjust these variables. (Col. 11, lines 18-22). Control logic processor 32 then uses the accessed information to alter the way that it processes the print job, based on a stored program. (Col. 11, lines 22-24).
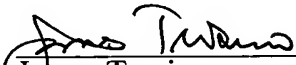
Thus, Siwinski does not seek to use manufacturing data regarding consumables to determine whether the expiration date of a consumable has been exceeded, but instead uses information about consumables to "compensate for combinations of consumables, allowing [a] printer to adjust its imaging parameters accordingly." (Col. 1, lines 49-67; Col. 3, lines 27-31). Because Siwinski is focused on compensating for characteristics of consumables, Siwinski is not focused on "expired" consumables (which seemingly implies that compensation is impossible).

Accordingly, because Siwinski does not describe the claimed invention, and seemingly points away from it, applicants respectfully submit that new claims 29 and 30 are allowable. Further, because 1-4, 7, 9-11 depend from claim 29, and claims 25-27 depend from claim 30, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-4, 7, 9-11 and 25-27 are also allowable.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, applicants submit that this application, including claims 1-4, 7, 9-11, 25-27 and 29-30, is allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner allow this application.

Respectfully submitted,

James Trosino
Registration No. 39,862
Attorney for Applicants